

Friends and Family of the Gambler Guns,

First and foremost your Soldier is doing is great. I say this with great pride as we go into our fourth month...yes...our fourth month and counting. We are no where close to starting a count down, but as all can attest the time is moving quickly and the amount of work necessary to maintain mission makes going to sleep at night easy.

I am not a statistics tracker, but to give you an idea of what we have accomplished I would like to show you a couple of data points. The battalion has flown over 3,600 hours since arriving in Iraq. This exceeds are yearly flying hour program during garrison operations...all in just 3 months. We have pumped a ½ million gallons of fuel...this is equal to about a two year peacetime rate. We are 20% ahead of our reenlistment quota's with \$400,000(+) worth of bonuses given. We have conducted 527 separate combat missions consisting of troops in contact, air assaults, MEDEVAC, escort missions, and reconnaissance. It is definitely a team of teams working towards one goal...mission accomplishment. Our record speaks for itself...mission accomplishment, safety, discipline, and accountability.

Do I think the operational tempo will slow down...no...I think we have settled into a predictable, but fast paced mission set. The systems we have emplaced to provide efficiency and stream line our operations our working. The Soldiers have found a battle rhythm that meets our goals and provides some free time. I know this sounds trivial, but we are now in a position where we can actually give a Soldier between a ½ day and a full day off every two weeks.

As you watch the news I expect your wondering what the "h..l" is going on. I could give you the media answer, but let me give you my opinion (and only my opinion) as one of many Soldiers doing their job. I believe we are at a critical crossroad...the balance of this country hangs in the balance. Either the attacks from these roaming terrorists groups will solidify the country...assisting in focusing the collective energy of the masses towards fighting terrorists who have invaded their country....or they will fall into chaos. Of course it is not this simple, but I do know of another country which had a civil war which turned out pretty good. We are watching Democracy in the making. It is not an easy process to watch, but it is our presence in this country which has allowed the seed to at least begin to grow. Whether we will be around to see it bear fruit is way above my pay grade, but I am certain we are a part of history in the making.

I usually do not get into political discussion...especially with friends...but it is hard to discuss the rudimentary aspects of our mission goals without discussing the political aspects of country building.

I am honestly pleased at our performance to date and believe we have constructed a foundation of excellence which will carry us through the year. I thank you all for your sacrifice and service to our Soldiers...the encouragement we receive on a daily basis from friends and families is as important as food or water is to our bodies...your love feeds our souls.

Thanks again to our Family Readiness Group and Read Detachment. Your sacrifice is noticeable to us all...

God bless you, God bless our unit, and God bless the United States of America.

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